

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 06215 271654Z  
ACTION SS-25

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R 271100Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7855  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 6215

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR PBOR MILI XD  
SUBJECT: SPECULATIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE AFGHAN-PAK TENSIONS

1. WE HAVE BEEN WONDERING HOW A SCENARIO OF INCREASED AFGHAN ASSERTIVENESS AGAINST PAKISTAN MIGHT BE PLAYED OUT. HOWEVER, BEYOND THE RATHER OBVIOUS ESCALATORY STEPS BY BOTH SIDES AS OUTLINED BELOW, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PUSH OUR SPECULATIONS VERY FAR. REQUEST THAT INR UTILIZE INFORMATION IN ITS FILES FROM PREVIOUS CONFRONTATIONAL PERIODS TO GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF LIKELY SCENARIOS. EMBASSY KABUL MAY WANT TO GIVE ITS COMMENTS, AS WELL.

2. AT PRESENT THE AFGHAN GOVT (DRA) SEEMS TO BE CHALLENGING THE DURAND LINE, ESPOUSING SELF-DETERMINATION FOR BOTH PUKHTUNS AND BALUCHIS AND, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THIRD PARTIES, COMPLAINING ABOUT ALLEGED PAK HOSTILITY AND PAK INSTIGATION OF DISSIDENTS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN. THE PAKS IN FAIRLY LOW-KEY FASHION HAVE WARNED THE DRA ABOUT INTERFERENCE IN PAK INTERNAL AFFAIRS, HAVE EXPRESSED HOPE FOR GOOD RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE "FIVE PRINCIPLES", AND HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING IN  
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EXPEDITING TRANSIT OF GOODS FROM KARACHI AS WELL AS FROM INDIA. WE KNOW OF NO BASIS FOR ACCUSING THE PAKS OF HOSTILITY OR OF FOMENTING EXILE ACTIVITY.

3. OUR FILES, PRUNED AS THEY SHOULD BE, ARE WEAK ON EVENTS IN THE BORDER AREAS DURING PREVIOUS PERIODS OF TENSION IN THE EARLY 1960S AND EARLY 1970S. THE CORPORATE

MEMORY HERE, HOWEVER, RECALLS ESCALATORY SCENARIOS FROM THOSE DAYS INVOLVING RISING RECRIMINATION AND ALLEGATIONS ON BOTH SIDES LEADING TO ACTIVE PROPAGANDA WAR, RESTRICTIONS ON TRIBAL PASSAGE (ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT SINCE MANY TRIBES ARE MIGRATORY), IMPOSITION OF TRANSIT RESTRAINTS ON GOODS AND TRAVELLERS LEADING ULTIMATELY TO BORDER CLOSURE, A RISE IN CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES BY INTELLIGENCE ACTIVISTS ON BOTH SIDES, INCLUDING GUN-RUNNING, AGENT-RUNNING, AND SABOTAGE WITHIN THE TRIBAL AREAS AND BEYOND, MENACING TROOPS MOVEMENTS AND OTHER MILITARY MUSCLE FLEXING ON BOTH SIDES, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A TOUCHY INCIDENT TO TURN BLOODY AND TO PROVOKE A LARGER CONFRONTATION OF MILITARY FORCE.

4. ALL PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES MAY, OF COURSE, BE NO RELIABLE GUIDE. THE SOVIET HAND IN KABUL IS A NEW FACTOR, AND A LOT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER THE DRA WOULD KEEP ITS OBJECTIVES LIMITED TO THE GOALS OF THE PAST IN THE PUSHTUN AREAS OR WHETHER THE DRA/SOVIET GOAL WOULD NOW INCLUDE DESTABILIZATION OF PAKISTAN ITSELF.

5. WE WOULD ALL HOPE THAT NONE OF THESE ESCALATIONS WILL OCCUR, AND THAT AFGHAN PREOCCUPATION WITH INTERNAL STABILITY MIGHT MAKE SUCH STEPS UNLIKELY IN THE SHORT RUN. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE INR ESTIMATES ABOUT THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AND SERIOUSNESS OF

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PREVIOUS ACTIONS BY BOTH SIDES AS WELL AS ITS VIEWS ON THE LIKELIEST MEANS AND METHODS IF SUCH A "BAD CASE" SCENARIO WERE AGAIN TO DEVELOP.

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## Message Attributes

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